

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 250
By Person, Curtis

A RESOLUTION to congratulate Laura Turner upon her receipt of the Humane Society of the United States' Citizen Lobbyist Legislative Achievement Award.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable public servants who have dedicated themselves to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens and their communities; and

WHEREAS, Laura Turner is one such estimable person who evinces the greatest integrity and probity in all her chosen endeavors, and particularly in her efforts to build a future in which there are no unwanted, unloved, or mistreated animals; and

WHEREAS, throughout her exemplary tenure as volunteer lobbyist, Laura Turner has distinguished herself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and as an exceptional asset to this state; she has led an effective and diligent campaign to improve the quality of life for both pets and their caretaker families through the passage of various pieces of legislation by the General Assembly and the institution of animal welfare reforms by various local governmental bodies; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Turner's outstanding abilities were recently recognized when she was named the recipient of the 2003-2004 Citizen Lobbyist Legislative Achievement Award by the Humane Society of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the award was bestowed on five individuals throughout the Nation who have achieved success in promoting legislation on behalf of animals; Ms. Turner's perseverance and hard work throughout the legislative process helped facilitate the passage of SB 3209/ HB 3458 (Public Chapter No. 920 of 2004) of the One Hundred Third General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, this vital piece of legislation expands the offense of "aggravated cruelty to animals" to include as an element of such offense the failure to provide food and water to a companion animal that results in death or in substantial risk of death to the animal; and

WHEREAS, in an effort to ensure the financial stability of animal control agencies and humane societies, P.C. 920 also authorizes such entities to require persons whose animal is in the entity's custody, pending the outcome of a criminal proceeding, to post sufficient security to pay all reasonable expenses incurred by the entity in caring for such animal, pending the disposition of the criminal charges, or else forfeit ownership of the animal; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Turner was also a stalwart proponent of Public Chapter No. 858 of 2002, which first created the aggravated cruelty to animals offense, and

WHEREAS, in that same year, she also lobbied successfully for the passage of Public Chapter No. 774, the so-called Puppy Mill Bill, which increased dog and cat dealer fees and increased the investigatory and enforcement powers of the Department of Agriculture in order to diminish the number of breeders who overproduce puppies with no breeding program, little attention to puppy placement, and poor health and socialization practices; and

WHEREAS, Public Chapter No. 42 of 1999, also supported by the lobbying activities of Ms. Turner, authorized the issuance of "Animal-Friendly" specialty license plates to support animal welfare; revenues produced from the sale of such plates are earmarked to fund animal sterilization programs in the interest of reducing animal overpopulation; and

WHEREAS, as a persuasive voice for animal interests, Laura Turner sits on the Animal Friendly Grant Committee which directs the proceeds of the animal-friendly specialty tag and awarded \$275,000 in grants last year alone to spay and neuter animals in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Turner also played an instrumental role in bringing about reforms in both Williamson County and Davidson County to ensure the humane euthanasia of dogs and cats who could not be placed with caretakers; and

WHEREAS, having always crusaded for animals and for reforms in the treatment of animals via legislation, Ms. Turner also worked successfully at the Florida State Capitol to ensure the passage of the felony dog fighting bill and for the discontinuation of using live rabbits for greyhound training before she moved to Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, her insightfulness and sensitivity regarding the treatment of animals, which has inspired Laura Turner to use her extraordinary talents in promoting the humane care of animals through lobbying and informational activities in her community, has also compelled her strong support of state and local legislation to protect and preserve the historic stone walls of

Middle Tennessee, including the relocation and rebuilding of such walls in special circumstances; and

WHEREAS, her contributions to the grassroots efforts of the Standing by Our Stone Walls organization helped to secure a \$200,000 grant from the Tennessee Department of Transportation to rebuild a historic stone wall on Hillsboro Road in Williamson County; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Turner's other local activities include sitting on the Williamson County Comprehensive Land Use Plan Study Committee and the Rural Roads Special Study Committee, both of which are committed to ensuring responsible growth and development in Williamson County; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to caring for mistreated or abandoned animals, she has opened her heart and her own home to a family of animals, which includes five dogs, twenty four cats, a twenty-four-year-old parrot, sheep, a mini donkey, a pot bellied pig, numerous hens, roosters, geese, ducks, and a thirty year-old rescued horse – a victim of starvation; and

WHEREAS, her many accomplishments aside, Ms. Turner is also deeply devoted to her family, and she has always remained true to family values of the highest order; she enjoys the love and companionship of her husband, Steve, and her three wonderful children, David, Katie, and Jackson; and

WHEREAS, Laura Turner's remarkable success as a public servant and civic leader is directly attributable to her reliance on the time-honored values of hard work and common sense and her uncommon ability to work well with people, and animals, from all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, she is a an extremely giving person who regularly reaches out with compassion to animals whom humans have treated unkindly and to those persons seeking to secure humane treatment and appropriate care for animals, and she epitomizes the ideal of the consummate professional, dedicated public servant, and reliable friend and neighbor; and

WHEREAS, Laura Turner is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and she should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby commend Laura Turner , a woman of remarkable integrity,

compassion, and social conscience for her honorable and astute service to animals and the humane treatment thereof and to the good people of Tennessee as a citizen lobbyist before the General Assembly, congratulate her upon her receipt of the 2003-2004 Humane Society of the United States' Citizen Lobbyist Legislative Achievement Award, and salute her unswerving commitment to solving the problems of animal neglect and mistreatment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.